Issue Seven September 2016

aargh!

Aotearoa Anarchist Review

What is Anarchism
and how do we get there?

EDITORIAL

Despotism is on horseback

To a friend,

Anarchism has not produced any organised ability in the present generation, only a few loose, struggling groups scattered over this vast country, that come together in 'conferences' occasionally, talk to each other, then go home. Then we never hear from them again until another conference is held. Do you call this a movement? You speak of 'the movement' in your letter. Where is it? You say "I just feel disgusted." I have been for a long time.

Anarchists are good at showing the shortcomings of others' organisations. But what have they done in the last fifty years, you say. Nothing to build up a movement; they are mere pipe-dreamers dreaming. Consequently, anarchism doesn't appeal to the public. This busy, practical world cares nothing for fine-spun theories – they want facts, and too, they want a few examples shown. ...

Anarchism is a dead issue in American life today. Radicalism has been blotted off the map of Europe. ... The worker is a mere appendage to the capitalist factory. Machinery has eliminated him. ...

Radicalism is at a low ebb today. We are living in strange times. Despotism is on horseback, riding at high speed. The worker is helpless; he has no voice in his mode or method of life – he just floats along on the tides of ill times.

American anarchist Lucy Parsons (1853 – 1942)
in a letter to a friend, 1934

Written in the US more than 80 years ago, Lucy Parson's analysis of the situation of the anarchist 'movement' back then may look bleak, but it is eerily echoed in this, the seventh edition of aargh!

So welcome to the seventh edition of aargh! This edition will leave you in no doubt about the meaning of the name: the sound one makes when extremely angry and frustrated.

When we picked the theme *What is anarchism and how do we get there* we thought this would be a positive, uplifting collection of articles. We should have known better. A look at the world around us should have been enough. Millions fleeing from war and terror, and more terror being inflicted on those who thought that they had escaped. Children being tortured in the hell hole of Nauru as part of a policy of deterrence. Homelessness and poverty becoming rampant even in a relatively rich country like New Zealand.

So if that is the state of the world then it's not really a surprise that this edition of aargh! reflects it. While the articles tackle the subject from very different angles, their common thread is angst, frustration and anger.

After all, what are we supposed to think of a world where you get into trouble for eating food instead of throwing it away? What do you do if the act of dreaming seems to be too concrete, but you don't want to give up hope? How do you escape the daily urge to waste your energy fighting against yet another neo-liberal austerity measure?

Strangely, we still think this makes an enjoyable read. The challenge for all of us is to turn our feelings into constructive action.

As always, we'd love to hear your thoughts on all this.

The Freedom Shop Collective @@@

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What do anarchists dream about?

By Monday

IT TOOK me a long time to call myself an anarchist. It's taken me longer to figure out what it means. I say it like it's a joke, or a challenge. Or sometimes I say it and I'm tired, and quiet. Yeah, I'm an anarchist. Once my friend asked me what that meant. He calls himself a pacifist but said he's never really considered why, other than "I don't ever want to get into a fight."

Fair enough.

What is anarchy, and what do we dream about? This world seeps into us. It's not separate from us and I can't talk about capital or hatred or power like they're other, like they're structures, like they're ideas. Those things are all inside of us. I'm so lucky in this world and I have $28,000 of debt and that sits in my lungs. I recycle every week but it's the ninth hottest year on record in a row and we know it's not getting any better. I dream about tidal waves most nights and, to be honest, I'm starting to recycle less. Last night I sat with my flatmates and we discussed whether it was worth turning on the heaters this winter. I have chilblains on my hands but it's not that big a deal. This year they're on my feet too. I don't want to think or type about work. I try to keep my nails short and I finally bought a comb for my hair. I don't know many people who want to have children. I know a lot of people who have them.

You can't dream with colours or shapes you haven't already seen – I read that in a book. Every face we see in a dream is one we've seen before. But what does that mean for the anarchist, who complains and complains and complains?

Well, what's your alternative?

Another friend, a different friend, thinks that human nature is just – this. I guess I believe in people, and I guess I believe we've never had a chance to see what "human nature" is. We grew up in this and we are this. We are hierarchies of power and worth. You are your dad talking down to your mum, and fear when walking down the street at night, and the shift of your eyes as you pass someone begging on the street. You are condescension and bullying and – let's get right to it – we all hail whiteness, and masculinity, and wealth. You don't get better from sexism and racism and ism ism ism, these things are you and your world. They're all of us, and what do anarchists dream of?

I don't always ask my friends how they are because I don't have time for their answers. See, my week is full up. Increasingly, I feel like I'm winding down, I'm tired. This is a natural spiralling, a sinking into the mattress, gently.

We know that the 'system isn't broken' because actually, see no actually, it's doing exactly what it's meant to do. Some people are living very very well, and comfortably. And the changes that we want – they won't let those happen. Those changes would be bad for them. Realising this, simplifying it and repeating it, hasn't helped me feel better or stronger. It's nice to be able to point at THEM, like they're separate from US, THEY did this, stop THEM.

I don't know if we can. Doesn't our analysis tell us this? We measure huge power structures and we say; "look at all those weapons, look at all that money and influence", and after that some of us still think that we can change it. I don't know if I do. I'm an anarchist. I'm an anarchist. Patches on a thin jacket that I got at the op shop, it still had a tampon in the pocket. Posters and zines. I don't know if anyone reads them but I read others, y'know? I'm nearly 26 years old and I feel like my time is up. This world sucks the energy out of us and we keep pouring it in. I guess until, y'know, we stop.

Here's some things that I see:

- Almost every young person I meet and work with is better than our parents. Feels more, sees more, takes more action. They're fighting to change everything they inherit.
- Pokémon GO will change and maybe save the world.
- We have absolutely no idea how technology will change everything, and I have no idea if we have enough time to wait for it to change everything. I also don't know if those changes will be positive.
- I can't cook but potluck dinners are increasingly important.
- It is possible to be truly in love.

This isn't the same as losing hope. I have that. But maybe hope is different to dreams. Dreams are things you can see, or imagine, I guess. I don't see how things can change, or get better, or even just stop. I can't practically envision a new world right now. I don't know if any of us really can. But I still feel hope for one. Hope for us. I don't have an alternative.

I'm an anarchist. xoxo @@@

We carry in our hearts

By Tuesday

"We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth, there is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world, here, in our hearts. That world is growing in this minute."

– Buenaventura Durruti, 1936

SO SAID Durruti three months before his death. Those words capture a time. A brief time in the 1930s when capitalism did not rule and people were able to live lives of possibility. It was a time that has been described a "living utopia" by some of those who were part of it. For us, here and now, the Spanish Revolution is a time to remember people who fought, lived and died living in communities based on responsibility, freedom and solidarity. It was a powerful time but a world far removed from the one I live in now.

In 21st century Aotearoa/NZ the dominant ethos appears to be individual need and self-satisfaction; accumulating and consuming are the common goals. The majority of us have bought the propaganda that this world of working to consume is the only reality; that there is no alternative to the current structure. It is so normal that members of parliament now call citizens 'customers' – and we do not look at what that culture of buying and selling is based on.

For our way of life is based on war. We are involved in endless wars without really being aware. War is so entrenched in our society that it is nearly invisible. We do not see that our world is built on mayhem, destruction and death of others. Just like in *Fahrenheit 451* (Ray Bradbury's 1953 dystopian novel), we only see the wars as distant fights, not part and parcel of our daily life. Wars are background noises for us in the ruling club. And NZ is part of the elite in this world. We have been part of the problem ever since this land was annexed by Britain and the Westminster system became dominant.

In the Westminster system there are few ethics and morals – the main goal is exploitation. Militarisation is the capitalist god. We need perpetual war to ensure profits enable our way of life to continue (at the expense, obviously, of the majority of the world). Despite being surrounded by war though, we are groomed to see it as exceptional – we spend millions remembering WWI and mouthing platitudes such as 'never again' despite the fact that NZ is currently involved in wars. However, as there is no draft and the soldiers are sold as peace-keepers, the majority are able to too easily ignore war.

Sometimes we have to acknowledge war. Events like Abu Ghraib become public but then quickly fade as distant memories, seen as outrageous isolated events that can be blamed on individuals. More recently, there is the investigation of the July 2016 US drone strike against families in Syria fleeing Islamic State militants (some estimates put the number killed at 212) but it will also be quickly forgotten (that is if you even knew it had occurred). But mostly we can ignore the wars. The deaths in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that happen because we need batteries for our iPhones are easily overlooked; we also pretend NZ does not give assistance in drone strikes.

Right now we live in a world where Pokémon GO gets more coverage than the wars we are waging.

And the evil thing is this has been a way of life deliberately created. Shortly after WWII ended, a war economy was built — it was good for business and our standard of living. When he left office in 1961, US president Eisenhower warned about the expansion of the military industrial complex — and now he is often quoted as someone with vision, despite us knowing that he helped build the war economy.

And we do not even see the wars at home. We accept the prisons, the police and the ever-increasing surveillance as necessary. Every day we are told we live in a dangerous world and need protection. Even in middle-class suburbia we are cautioned not to get to know our neighbours face-to-face. Sites such as *Neighbourly* tell us it is better to know your neighbours on-line. *Neighbourly* helps us become aware of who's in our neighbourhood: "Finally an easy way to learn the name of the nice neighbour from down the street" or "Keep informed about any suspicious activity, send urgent updates to your neighbours when required and discuss emergency planning." It taps into the fear that is bred to keep the status quo in power.

So the war economy is even entrenched in our local community – companies profit not only from global war but also from the expanding control industry at home.

And our world is controlled. The majority of us may not live behind physical bars but we live behind a web of propaganda. The primary role of the mass media in countries such as NZ is to "manufacture consent", to ensure popular support for the current capitalist system. We accept sound bites of censored news as the truth. However, with the online world we also build our own webs, we self-censor.

Our use of the internet and social media limits our world view. Our online use helps create our own

limited circle of knowledge. For example, data-surveillance is used to limit the knowledge that appears on our screens. Algorithms deduce from meta-data what we will be interested in – corporate surveillance ensures that we are targeted with the news and ads that interest us. Then in a self-limiting cycle we go on to things like Facebook and further limit our circle of friends and knowledge. Our use of social media, combined with a steady decrease of print media, means that what is now viewed as journalism becomes more and more superficial. Breaking news is often live-feeds, someone's photos taken at the time with no analysis. News is also often an individual opinion from someone who has an internet connection and the time and energy to send their own story into *Stuff*. The result is that in-depth critical journalism is becoming rare. We end up in a one-way orientated world only reflecting what we want to see.

The cycle of fear grows stronger – the fear of the others, of strangers, of terrorism. Thus we do not see the other terrorism that is happening. We are able to ignore our role in the terror we are creating in other countries.

Sometimes something rocks the boat enough for us to become angry, but that dissent is safely channelled. Not only is our consent manufactured but our dissent becomes "consenting dissent". We are allowed enough dissent to show that we care. Our dissent is controlled.

Consenting dissent includes all those online petitions and 'likes' we do on Facebook. A site can pop up calling for a protest against whatever is the current theme, hundreds of people can rant and support the action – but how many do something other than type a few words and click a few buttons? Consenting dissent also includes the token marches we do to voice our disapproval of some governmental action.

We are contained in a loop of constrained protest. Consenting dissent can allow us to feel like we are fighting back. But it's all a sop.

So it becomes the norm, we go on protests demanding rights in the current system – rather than demanding that the current system be smashed and overthrown. We fight, for example, for changes to be made to prisons to make them better now for those unfortunate enough to be incarcerated, rather than just fighting to abolish prisons. We make submissions asking for a tweak here and there on a new oppressive law, rather than demanding that the whole thing be ripped up.

The more demands are made, the more reforms are made – but I fear all we do is strengthen the system. By us helping with little tweaks here and there, aren't we just as crazy as those who believe all they have to do to be 'political' is to vote every few years? Our reforms and tweaks help to weave the net tighter around us. It helps to gloss over the history of colonisation of this land and our subsequent role as

part of the ruling club. It helps give the system a veneer of respectability.

I don't know the answer but I do believe it is time we broaden the fight from consenting dissent. Capitalism is so ingrained in our world view that to envisage a world without capitalism is seen as ludicrous – we need to change that. We need to plant the seeds that a living utopia can exist, that to talk of revolution is not fantastical. That the lives we live can be lives based on respect, solidarity and possibilities.

I live in the hope that soon we reach the stage where people are no longer mollified just rocking the boat; but fight to sink the fucker – and we will have worlds where people can live lives of possibility. Lives based on responsibility, solidarity and respect. Or capitalism will implode. @@@

Marxiste, tendance Groucho

By Wednesday

BORN JULIUS HENRY MARX in 1895, Groucho, as his stage name implies, was a social critic and satirist. He opposed the status quo and was anarchic, if not anarchist, in his approach to politics: "*Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies.*" and "*… the world is full of people who think they can manipulate the lives of others merely by getting a law passed.*" "*All people are born alike... except Republicans and Democrats.*"

He was not a fan of the military: "*Military intelligence is a contradiction in terms.*"

He is famous for the two-way insult, "*I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member.*"

In the film *Horse Feathers* he sings a song entitled "*Whatever it is, I'm against it*" aimed at committees, boards and other petty authorities.

The filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard is alleged to have quipped "*Je suis Marxiste, tendance Groucho*" in response to France's 1968 pseudo-revolutionary unrest.

Chastised at school for minor offences, I grew up anti-authoritarian and have never been a fan of parliamentary so-called democracy. I recognised early on that politicians don't have our best interests at heart. The first time I was eligible to vote I crossed out the names of all candidates and have continued to do so ever since. The idea of one person having power over a large number of others, licensed to make choices for them (even if you could remove that person by voting them out of office every three years), seemed preposterous. The fact that anyone would seek such power was disturbing.

I am attracted to a political ideology that doesn't have strictly materialist economic ends. Our current system just aims to build a bigger, better (and ultimately society- and soul-destroying) mousetrap. I am turned off by the humourlessness of many left groups and have more time for the *tendance Groucho* approach to politics that is seen in satirical, humorous writing, for example. Marx (Groucho, not Karl) could have been thinking of po-faced leftist groups when he said: "If you find it hard to laugh at yourself, I would be happy to do it for you."

Before writing this article I had a strange dream that I had been expelled from a left-wing group because I believed that the universe was cube-shaped. This somewhat allegorical situation would never arise in a genuine anarchist group, but could easily happen in a mainstream political party or a rigid right- or left-wing group, including the 57 varieties of (Karl) Marxism.

Anarchism, by contrast, is a carefree, creative, classless, dogma-less ideology that includes, and has included, all kinds of people whose ideals are socialist and collective rather than individualistic and self-centred. Being classless, however, does not mean we deny the class struggle. The social justice element of anarchism demands that class-based and other hierarchies are attacked and demolished.

Individual freedom does not include the right of political leaders, landlords and bosses to exploit other people. Some people have a tendency to grab power in the form of money and influence, which is why anarchism means having no positions of power (anarchism = no rulers) that can be abused. The capitalist economy is run for the benefit of a few to satisfy their selfish interests and power is inevitably concentrated in the hands of a few, even in a so-called democratic country. Living in a parliamentary 'democracy' means having a severely restricted choice, and sometimes no choice at all. It is a system where at least half the population have to live with a government they didn't vote for.

It is not enough to be serious, reliable, polite and well-mannered. Friendliness is what holds communities together, based on empathy and tolerance. Co-operation is not a nice add-on but essential to a well-functioning society. Groups focused on a noble cause still don't work if people don't like each other. New Zealand society, never egalitarian to begin with, has fragmented under the forces of neoliberalism and competitive individualism, making it hard for many people to identify with the aims and ethics of fellow citizens. Selfishness and violent competitiveness, to which all humans and animals have a tendency, have been made much worse by laissez-faire capitalism.

Having decided that their cause is worth fighting for, anarchists have to bear in mind that success is uncertain. We lack resources and skills and are capable of making mistakes. The worst mistake to make, however, is to do nothing.

My ideal anarchist society is community-focused, decentralised, socialist, friendly, practising mutual aid and co-operation. It is not so pragmatic that people are relegated to second place, but not so idealistic that nothing worthwhile gets done. To end with another saying of Groucho's, "*I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal.*" @@@

The stamp above is the republic of Abkhazia's philatelic tribute to Marxist-Lennonism. Abkhazia, situated in Western Transcaucasia, between the Black Sea and the Caucasian mountains, proclaimed independence in 1990.

Wikipedia notes that the Marx Brothers were known for their incisive and wacky sense of humour. They satirised human hypocrisy, officialdom and high society, and became famous for their improvisational, free-form comedy. According to us, they managed to get anarchistic messages into mainstream entertainment. @@@

The Dunedin Anarchist Army at the Mount John protest, 1972

The anachist army was an active group in the 1970s.

In ***Rabble Rousers and Merry Pranksters: A History of Anarchism in Aotearoa/New Zealand From the Mid-1950s to the Early 1980s*** author Toby Boraman states, "*The inventive rebellion of this period proved that events can swing in a more anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist direction quite rapidly, and so there is no need to be permanently pessimistic about the chances for radical transformation.*"

Why I haven't stopped being an anarchist

By Thursday

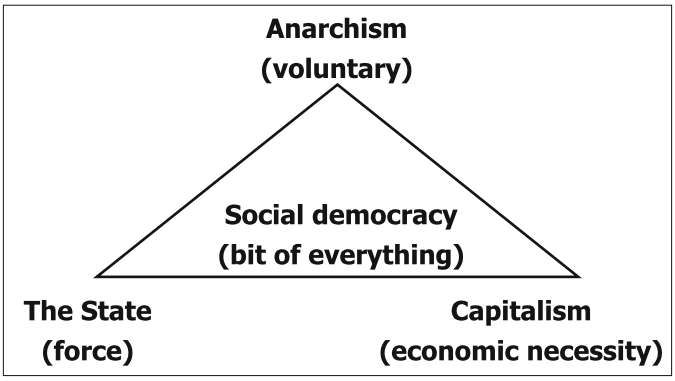
AS IS often the case, it was a few random things that made me an anarchist – a generally leftist family, a chance encounter with a pleasant guy (whose politics I only found out about after he was dead), finding a British anarchist 'zine that was not only radical and intelligent, but also funny.

And there was a moment at a demo where we were chasing the car of a US congressman, and I looked around and realized only me, some anarcho-punks and a couple of Bohemian anarchist types, were actually trying to catch up with the car, rather than hanging back, dawdling along and loudly shouting "Quick! Get him!".

What keeps me an anarchist is, on a good day, is a sense of optimism, hope and the terrific possibilities of a society where fucking people over isn't normal. What keeps me an anarchist on a bad day is the obvious bankruptcy of all other political systems, which are merely ways of justifying fucking people over and debating how much its OK to fuck people over and in what circumstances.

Given these are the systems in control of the world, it's easy to lapse into gloomy apathy. Luckily, I grew up in the 1970s and 80s, in the dying days of the cold war, when caricatures such as Ronnie Reagan and Maggie Thatcher, and their then great pals from the silly uniform brigade, the likes of Pinochet and Saddam Hussein, were in control. Survival seemed a pipe dream. We read comics and watched TV shows that portrayed the future as either scratching a living among the post-apocalypse ruins or studying unemployment at school in preparation for a life on the dole. The ingrained sense of black humour we developed set us up in good stead for a less spectacular, but hardly more sensible world.

And if you're not an anarchist, what else is there? There's totalitarianism of various forms, which means either shutting up and doing as you are told or being murdered. Which doesn't sound too flash. Or there's the world's most dominant ideology: social democracy, a sort of compromise between the three methods of running society (see diagram). There is a large role for the state, much of the economy is in the hands of private business and citizens are at least vaguely free to organize voluntary groups. While governments preach the free-market, they still run heaps of the economy and maintain large welfare budgets in areas where this gains them political support.



Social democracy gets awfully complicated as it tries to balance these three forms of organisations. Right-wing social democrats spend their time trying to figure out crazier and crazier schemes to use tax money to keep capitalism afloat, despite the capitalists' insistence on building a risky and unsustainable economic model that reaps them huge profits, but is likely to collapse at any moment. They play games with the economy trying to privatize things then buying them back or bailing them out after the capitalists have milked them dry.

Left social democrats tie themselves into theoretical knots trying to ensure people aren't unequally fucked over according to their race, gender, sexual preference or whatever. But they are OK about people being fucked over according to their economic status. Or just see this as inevitable or something. They'll get upset about too much inequality, but don't seem certain how much is too much. And the acceptable level seems to vary according to which side of an imaginary line on the map people live on. They also lament the failure of people already scratching a living to make sacrifices for the good of the planet and bring in regulations to try and force other people to lead more socially responsible lives. None of this ever works, but they are too scared of the consequences to try something different.

Some left social democrats will support everything anarchists advocate until you call it anarchism – then their well-honed cowardice cuts in and they backtrack, muttering excuses that other people aren't ready for such a thing or how they don't like extremism, but are actually thinking that they are quite comfortable really and while its bad Chinese workers are jumping off the roofs of their factories and the rainforests are being cut down, its not really so bad that we need to change our lifestyles, is it?

There seems to me to be three reasons for not being an anarchist, misguided selfishness, hopeless naivety or deeply ingrained cynicism. Of the people I meet that have an actual interest in politics, most on the right suffer from the former while those on the left suffer from one of the latter.

So I'll go on being an anarchist until somebody comes up with a better idea. Please let me know if you do. Anyone? Huh…? I'm waiting… @@@

No cash FOR food AND booze

By Friday

YOU KNOW what, I know fuck-all facts – this whole thing is my personal experiences. Some people don't like this, they think emotional arguments are not as valid as facts. Firstly, they can fuck off. Secondly, it is through emotions that we experience and enjoy the world, so what better place to start with a world-changing idea like Anarchy than with the way we all experience the world?

I know how I feel and that makes me continue to believe in Anarchy. How Anarchy will free us from fears like these and many other things to create a world that is pleasurable, not a grind; and free, not controlled.

So let's start out with something from deep inside me – my two greatest fears: going hungry and my mates killing themselves. Pretty intense way to start, I know, but I think these tie into how I think Anarchy will make life better for everyone and, although I say these are fears, all I feel writing this is anger.

First off: hunger. Pretty basic; we've all been hungry, especially if, like me, you have no bloody money. There is something deep to the fear of hunger; it is a primal fear. The fact that in a 'modern', 'equal' society people still need to live with the shadow of going hungry hanging over them is terrible! How can a society be considered successful if it can't even provide what is needed to live?

Hell, I'm hungry writing this and will probably be by the time you are reading this. I'm not out on the street starving and stealing to survive (yet) but what can't be denied is the amount of food waste in our society and the high price of food. As any table-surfing dumpster diver knows, people don't fucking finish their food. I've seen whole meals left at food courts and if you get caught taking them (if the cleaners don't get to them first), you're out! For having the audacity to eat food instead of letting it go in the tip.

The same 'people', the pigs, who will arrest you for dumpster diving or stealing food so you don't starve to death, will show up immediately for any protest where they use all the violence they can get away with and maybe a bit more in the cells for good measure, and if you do anything back – BAM off to jail. They are the ones who won't show up for domestic abuse and will ignore rape victims, who are hours late if you've been robbed or have your sister's fried-out ex-boyfriend bashing on the door. It's simply a joke that they are supposed to protect us; anyone who actually has experienced them and isn't living in some flash waterfront house knows that they're just bastards.

You can't take unwanted waste; all you are allowed to do is buy, buy, buy. If you're out of cash, tough fucking luck.

Secondly, my mates killing themselves. This is something (hopefully) everyone would hate the idea of if they thought about it, but luckily most people don't have to. Sometimes one person tops themselves and that's it. I doubt I'll have many friends left in 10 or 20 years – if I'm even around, that is. Depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, addiction and any other number of mental illnesses fuck up loads more people than anyone likes to admit. something (hopefully) everyone would hate the idea of if they thought about it, but luckily most

Old police water cannon bought and adapted by German anarchists

people don't have to. Sometimes one person tops themselves and that's it. I doubt I'll have many friends left in 10 or 20 years – if I'm even around, that is. Depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, addiction and any other number of mental illnesses fuck up loads more people than anyone likes to admit.

At least with my mates we're open about how we feel. Maybe that's just the punk "don't give a fuck" attitude, but I have sat down and talked with multiple friends about suicide, their attempts and thoughts as well as mine. Hell, I told my friend I had a dream she slit her wrists and we laughed about it. Not to mention all the other talks about anxiety and depression and whatever the fuck else.

Big shock, most of my mates also aren't rich, maybe we're just the underclass; over-exposed to this shit. Or maybe it drives us to extreme lifestyles. All I know is that any order where people can't cope in – so much that they kill or harm themselves, or smoke meth just to get through the day — is rotten to the core.

And even if you haven't suffered through that shit, all it takes is one bad day to send you on a downward spiral. Everyone experiences their own struggle. There's race, gender, sexuality and many other forms of oppression which are hard for me, a white man, to talk about. All I can say on that is, spend enough time with people of colour or women and you will see racism and sexism committed by fucking strangers on the street and that makes me sick. In the end the only escape can be getting fucked up on booze and drugs to have a night escaping this shitty world.

Well that's the fear and rage out of the way now. Anarchy is better, more fulfilling, more beautiful and equal and of course more free; it'd be a utopia-heaven on earth, of course. Not that there is a heaven, but we can get a helluva lot closer once we smash through this capitalist-state barrier.

What I want is for the world I see when I am with my friends to be a reality; where food and shelter are given freely to someone who is in need. To feel comfortable and happy in my life, where people are treated equally no matter how much they have, for people to be free from hierarchy and control and be able to live as they wish.

I want people to live and work and love together

freely and openly with no leaders, no subordinates, nobody ordering somebody what to do. I want to be able to feel the freedom you feel from going off the beaten path; when you hitch-hike and don't know how long the trip will take. Is it so crazy to ask that life, all of our lives, be so free and full of pleasure, for people to be happy and work willingly rather than with the threat of starvation hanging over their head?

Is it so crazy to ask that people be able to decide for themselves what they need and want to breathe freely and cherish each day as they cherish one another? And want so many other things for society – to work for each other collectively and not for some bosses or politicians, to not be pushed around by police or other people who simply want to control even if they think it is for our own good?

Is that so crazy, so far-fetched that I want to be free, happy and truly equal with everyone else in the world?

Whenever I think how Anarchy will be achieved, one quote always comes to mind:

> *"We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth; there is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here, in our hearts. That world is growing in this minute."*
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> *– Buenaventura Durruti, 1936*

It is the belief in Anarchy and what free people can make that drives me forward; makes me believe in what can be that makes me willing to do what it takes to achieve it. Not anything, the ends don't justify the means when moving towards liberation. We must act towards each other so that when the new world comes we have already broken from the shackles of the old.

I do not care if it is violent, if cops, soldiers, CEOs and politicians must die, if our cities are ruined and our wills are broken. Because as long as we create the world we want to see as we fight, in whatever form that fight must take, I know once we are liberated that liberation will grow and multiply into a type of equality and freedom we cannot even begin to imagine. It will be worth it no matter how many protests, blockades, signs smashed and spray-painted, shops burnt and smashed, guns fired and bombs exploded – in the end we will be free. If you wonder why I feel this radicalism you must simply look at the world and see the suffering and injustice in it, because only then will you know that it will be worth the struggle, the heartbreak and the sacrifice. @@@

Learning from Spain

By Saturday

EIGHTY YEARS ago, the population of Spain rose up to defeat a military coup and to revolutionise Spanish society. For a brief period, collectivised factories and farms were a reality, people organised their lives together without coercion from either bosses or the state. It is estimated that up to 8 million people participated in collectivisation, out of a total population of 24 million.

The Freedom Shop celebrated the anniversary with a series of talks and film screenings because for many of us today, the Spanish revolution is still an inspiration, a reference point in history.

So why isn't possible today what was possible then? After all, there is no shortage of crises in the world, and each one should be reason enough for an uprising.

The problem is, everything was different then.

To start with, the economic situation in NZ today is vastly different from the one in Spain in 1936. There was a shortage of food and of industrial goods, so a big focus of the revolution was to produce enough food and to increase the output of the factories. Today, we have the reverse situation. The supermarkets are filled to the brim and every evening enough food to feed a small village is thrown out. People still go hungry, but not because there isn't enough to eat, it's just that they can't afford to buy it. Manufactured goods are also in abundance and the problem is not that people don't have a fridge or a washing machine. Everything that can be mass produced is produced in such quantities that we have to be brainwashed into wanting it. The last thing we need to do is increase the output of useless crap that uses up limited natural resources, kills people during production and pollutes the environment.

The political landscape was also vastly different. There was such a thing as class consciousness – people were acutely aware that they were being exploited by the capitalist class and they wanted to change that. Today, only the ruling class has retained that consciousness. The rest of us have swallowed the neo-liberal propaganda that every austerity measure is some sort of 'opportunity' that only losers refuse to take. People have internalised the belief that poverty is an individual problem and that it is their own laziness that prevents them from being millionaires, or even owning their own home.

This class consciousness existed back then around the world, including in NZ, and that is why people travelled to Spain to fight in the international brigades.

Anarchism is about free individuals working together in communities. Thirty years of neo-liberal politics have destroyed communities that once existed and have individualised all social issues. The left has adapted to that by retracting to identity politics. We have become inward looking. A lot of us just fight for improvements for their own little circle, if they still fight at all. The result is that the radical left stews even more in its own juice than ever before. Building communities of any sort is a major struggle in itself today.

Back in Spain, the anarchists had a strong foothold in the working class. The largest union in Catalonia was the anarchist CNT. Anarchists were able to demonstrate every day what their ideals were and how to get there. Long before Franco's coup in July 1936, there were committees who sorted out greedy landlords and who ran alternative schools.

We are missing that opportunity today. The individualised society has robbed us of the opportunities of collective actions. Workplace organising happens rarely and has often even been replaced by Facebook groups.

But for those of us who haven't given up on the idea of a society based on collectivism, there is another problem. We are defining ourselves as the radical left, which implies that there is a non-radical left. And that is what also has disappeared, especially in New Zealand. Sectors of society that used to occupy the moderate, liberal left viewpoint – academics, civil

An armoured vehicle from the Durruti Column

liberties groups, etc. – have either shifted to the right or completely vanished from the political scene.

As a result, we shy away from even trying to put our ideas out there because we see the ease with which the mainstream dismisses the slightest deviation from the neo-liberal agenda as lunacy.

So we attempt to fill the void that is created by the absence of a moderate left ourselves. We find ourselves organising public meetings with speakers who make us cringe, but who will attract an audience that we can't otherwise reach. And we need this audience, so the logic goes, because we need to activate these people first before we can put out more radical demands.

We end up making submissions to select committees or speaking at council meetings because no one else does it, knowing full well what a waste of time it is and that we could use our energy in much more fun and meaningful ways. We get bogged down and ground to pieces in the attempt to stop yet another law that gives the state more intrusive powers, or to fight against the 101st trade agreement. We put up a banner asking the government to double the refugee quota instead of demanding the abolition of all borders.

And it's not like that strategy is successful, either. The Double the Quota campaign is a case in point. Enormous amounts of energy, resources and money have gone into the campaign, all major NGOs were on board – and the government simply gave the finger. Sometimes we manage to fool ourselves into believing that we prevented the worst, slowed the process down, or drove the cost up. No one likes to admit that they have wasted their time.

Maybe it's time to just let go. The world is in such a fucked-up state that it hardly matters what laws are passed here next week. The vast majority of people in the world have way bigger problems.

But they also have something we are lacking: dreams. The millions who lost everything and fled Syria have a much clearer idea of what they want than we do. We have become so bogged down in daily politics that we tend to lose sight of what we really want. A bit like the Labour Party, only worse, because we actually have ideals that are worth fighting for.

The thousands who formed the 'march of hope' from Budapest to Austria in September 2014 have shown us that people together can bring down borders. It was their determination that caused the governments to cave in and let them through.

We need to get back to being radical and to formulate our radical ideals because we are the only ones left who have any alternative to the current system at all. The times where people would sympathise to some degree with us, but then support social democrats because they had the more 'realistic' solutions, are over. A look at the NZ Labour party, Bernie Sanders in the US or Jeremy Corbyn in the UK shows that they only have yesterday's solutions to today's problems, if any at all. None of them can come up with how the economy could work in a way that reverses climate change and respects human rights. We can.

And we need to be serious about it. The single-issue campaigns that a lot of us have been involved in are often short-lived. We manage to get many people involved in the build-up to an action for a few weeks or months and then they disappear again, often disillusioned by a lack of success, but mostly because they never expected the struggle to last longer. We need to accept that the revolution is not around the corner, and that there are no 'quick wins'. Any meaningful change will involve a lot of hard work, likely for the rest of our lives.

We need to realise that working for radical change will upset the establishment and that it will retaliate. With that perspective, we need to work sustainably and we need to create structures that enable others to do so as well.

The Spanish revolution erupted on the day of Franco's coup, but it was preceded by many years of work – raising awareness and preparing communities for the change. The anarchist women's organisation *Mujeres Libres* called this process 'capacitation', a word for which there is no direct English translation, but one intuitively gets the idea. The situation *Mujeres Libres* were in, was that a lot of women couldn't read and were disconnected from the political struggle that men were involved in – often deliberately kept that way by their own partners. Centuries of patriarchy and Catholicism had resulted in women being ashamed of their lack of literacy and what they perceived as 'cultural backwardness'. But of course they knew what was going on and what needed to change. So 'capacitation' was a process of education and empowerment, that enabled these women to speak up and fully participate in (and often lead) the revolution.

We are in a similar situation today in the sense that people need education and empowerment – not in a socialist indoctrinating way, but by us showing them what our ideals are. Not what minor reforms may be possible, but what we really want.

And who knows, maybe some people will come around to joining us. @@@

It won't just burgeon

By Sunday

SOME PEOPLE think a simple ABC or 1-2-3 of what anarchy is and how to get to it is a needed item. I've had people come into the Freedom Shop and ask for the Anarchist Cookbook thinking it has the plan: the beginning, the steps and the end. They get disappointed. But that's the great thing about anarchy – there is no plan and there is no end-point.

There is no theory or ideology that can be structured, built and imposed on society for we accept that society is not static or rigid. Anarchists do not see people as a group that must be organised from above or structured or manipulated by rules and regulations to ensure control. We do not believe that people are inherently unethical, immoral and focused only on self-gain. We do not believe that violence is a necessary evil.

We see the possibility of people striving to live together in communities based on mutual aid, support and solidarity because we see people as responsible and respectful beings.

We look at the current society that we live in and see the violence, the racism, sexism, and multitudes of oppression that exist – all those forms of domination that are woven into society and inculcated into people – that help make the backbone of capitalism. We see the police, the prisons, the government and all the institutions that ensure the functioning of the state.

We live in a world that is an antithesis to what we believe in, and I know we are not alone. We live in a world that many people find wanting. Lots of people loathe the values that surround us – they see its heritage of colonialism and imperialism but too many believe in the trickery and bribery of the false hopes brought by the pretence of being a good citizen. So many people believe that change can come about by participating in the government, by running political campaigns, lobbying or even fighting for reforms here and there.

Anarchy is different because we do not want to make changes to the current system, we want to get rid of it. We believe that it's worthwhile to strive for totally different worlds. And that is where we often get bogged down – how do we create change? We know that we have to change the system, but at the same time there are needs now that need fighting, to make life a little better for some people right now. The protests and actions that we do, sometimes they do result in change, but in the long-term are they the result we want? An easy to understand example, I believe, is prison. How do we help make life better for people imprisoned right now but at the same time fight for abolition of places? I believe that prisons should not exist, yet over the years I have also fought for changes within prison policy and structure. Now I ponder how much did my actions help to widen the net? And I believe we (or others like me) will be asking the same question in another thirty years when double-bunking is a distant memory but prisons still exist.

And that is a problem with our communities – there is little memory of our struggles; there is minimal continuity in our communities. New struggles appear and we get involved in them without usually looking at them as part of a continuum. Activism that came before us is all too often ignored. Our stories are often not recorded in history (or never formed part of the 'official' history). So there are numerous struggles and stories that are forgotten, that are not taught or shared. For example, recently I have heard people (fellow anarchists) speak about the police and military doing a joint exercise as if it were new and outrageous. They seem to have forgotten how the state wrested control of Takaparawha after the re-occupation of the land in the 1970s. And that is just one of the more visible examples of army and police liaison, those forces have worked and planned together for a long

Anarchist-produced armoured car, Barcelona, 1936.

time. Last month I heard academics talk about how NZ during the anti-Vietnam war era did not experience any direct action. They said that the protests were peaceful – they erased the bombings that occurred and eradicated the people imprisoned as a result. They have forgotten the person left permanently intellectually disabled during one protest against Spiro Agnew in 1970 (and that's just one person I know of).

If we do not recall that other people have also struggled and fought to change, that a range of tactics have been used, if we keep seeing things as new and shocking, we tend to have to re-start the fight each time. And I think this is the same problem for wider society – people keep jumping through the hoops and vote every few years. Or they organise campaigns to change a policy or structure without situating that fight or particular battle in history and seeing how we constantly repeat ourselves. As Lucy Parsons said, "Governments never lead; they follow progress. When the prison, stake or scaffold can no longer silence the voice of the protesting minority, progress moves on a step, but not until then."

I think we need to be more creative in our fight; we need to recall and understand that we are part of a long process – we are neither new nor spectacular.

We should look at tactics that have been used before us and also dream of fresh ones. And we should keep in mind that revolution is not usually spontaneous; it wasn't in Spain, it didn't just burgeon in 1936. And it won't just burgeon here overnight.

Life does not need to be based on oppression and exploitation. Let's ensure we do our best to break the cycle of 'progress' and live. @@@

RECIPE

Mollie's Burning Hot Soup!

Ingredients

4 cups dried lentils – any kind (lentils don't need soaking)
6 to 7 cups water (tomato juice can be substituted for about 2 cups water)
1 can of tomatoes, or 3 to 4 large ripe chopped-up fresh tomatoes
any fresh vegetables you want to add
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon paprika
1 whole dried chilli (or more)
1 teaspoon dried thyme (or about 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme)
2 cloves garlic
2 onions
salt
6 tablespoons tomato paste
2 tablespoons vinegar (preferably balsamic or cider)
Crushed red pepper to taste

Place lentils and water in a large soup pot and bring to a boil. Once boiling, partially cover and lower the heat to a simmer. Leave it this way for about 30 minutes, checking it every now and then to be sure it isn't cooking any faster than a gentle simmer. (You can chop the vegetables during this time.)

Add tomatoes, cumin, paprika, thyme, chilli, garlic, onions, and also any other vegetables you want in the soup (carrots, peas, potatoes for instance). Stir, partially cover it again, and then let it cook for another 30 minutes or so. Check the water level as it cooks, and add water or tomato juice in 1/4-cup increments as needed. Stir from the bottom fairly regularly during the cooking.

After about 30 minutes add salt and the tomato paste. Stir and continue to simmer slowly, partially covered, until the tomato paste is all blended in, it takes about 10 minutes. Stir in the vinegar, black pepper and crushed red pepper, adjusting the seasonings to taste. Serve hot. @@@

Adapted from
Mollie Katzen's cookbook

The sick logic of deterrence

By Peppertree

ON 10 AUGUST, the Guardian published the 'Nauru Files' – a database of over 2000 incident reports from the Australian-run refugee detention camp on Nauru. The reports documented what many of us already knew: that physical, sexual and mental abuse is rife in these camps, that suicides and attempted suicides are a daily occurrence. Reports of what is happening on Nauru and Manus Island have been released pretty regularly over the last few years. Just recently the harrowing report *Protection Denied – Abuse Condoned* by the Australian Women in Support of Women on Nauru was made public. Whoever wants the graphic images to go with the reports should watch the film *Chasing Asylum* by Eva Orner, it's all in there. What the reports add is evidence of the regularity of these things.

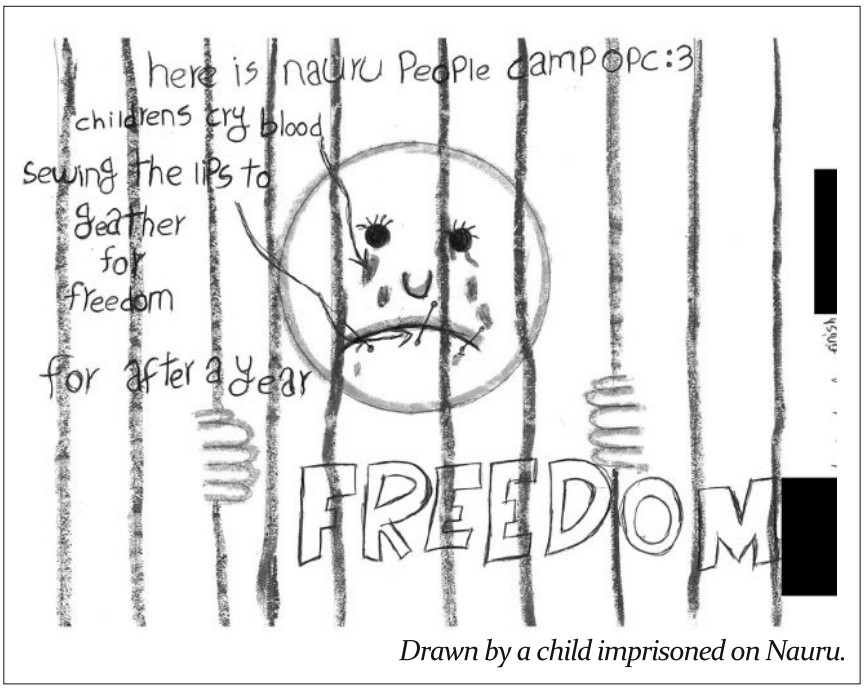
The reports and the film show how the security guards from Wilson Security (yes, the same company that manages car parks in NZ and who operate as First Security here) are abusing their power, how they make racist comments about "shooting the fuckers" and generally behave like nasty security guards do. No surprises there.

But what both the film and the Nauru Files also show is the complicity of NGOs. Many of the reports are filed by 'aid workers' from Save The Children (one of the NGOs participating in running the camp). Why an organisation with a name like 'save the children' gets involved with detention camps beggars belief. But they are not the only ones. Back in 2013, the Salvation Army was also involved. According to a documentary by the Australian ABC's Dateline programme, that organisation was paid AUS $75 million a year for having a handful of staff on the island. It seems that there's a lot of money to be made from recording the torture of children on report cards.

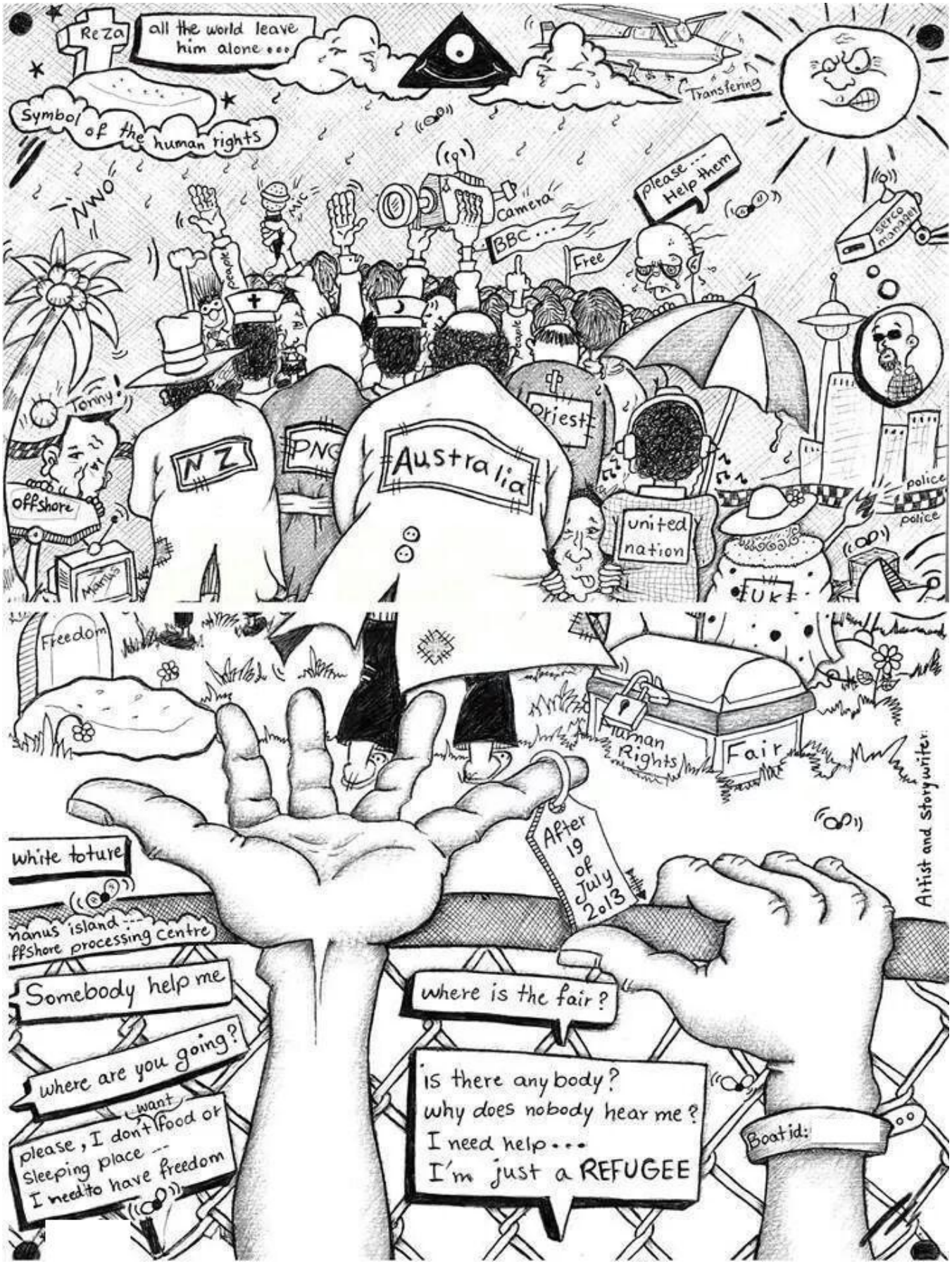
And let's be clear: the abuse of children, the ongoing torture, the assaults are no accidents. They are not isolated cases of sarcastic security guards abusing their power, they are not the unfortunate result of under-resourcing and under-staffing. They are an integral part of the Australian deterrence policy. They are necessary to effectively 'turn back the boats'. Only if the conditions that await refugees coming to Australia are so indescribably horrific is the deterrence logic going to work. Only if what happens in these camps is worse than the wars and other horrors from which people are fleeing, will they stop wanting to come to Australia – this is the sick logic of deterrence. The sexual abuse of children is the price that has to be paid. Anyone who thinks that the policy of deterrence can be maintained without torture and abuse in the camps is dreaming.

The Australian government probably isn't even that unhappy about the publication of these reports. While it is embarrassing for them on the surface, the wider the news about what an Australian detention camp looks like is spread, the more effective the deterrence will be. The official message that "if you come to Australia by boat, there is no way you will make Australia home" has unofficially changed; 'if you come to Australia by boat, your children will be abused.'

Therefore no amount of appealing to the Australian government to change the conditions in the camps will make a difference. It can't. The only way to remedy the situation, the only way that the people seeking refuge in Australia will be treated humanely is to end the policy of deterrence and to shut down Nauru and Manus immediately. And ending fucking war would help too. @@@



Drawn by a child imprisoned on Nauru.



The above was drawn by a man held in immigration detention on Manus Island. He attempted to reach Australia by boat after July 19, 2013, when the Rudd government introduced mandatory offshore detention. The author's pen name is 'Eaten Fish'.